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Possible Strategy of Soviet Forces Attacking from the Soviet Zone of Germany

1. There are two potential developments in the political situation which may induce the Soviet High Command to attack West Europe: First, the political tension at any point of the global East-West boundaries of interest may reach the boiling point and, possibly against the Kremlin's wishes, may precipitate a "hot war", with the quick-acting aggressor gaining the initiative; or second, the Kremlin may decide that the eventual goal of Bolshevist world conquest cannot be attained more effectively and more quickly by any means other than a preventive war with the object of seizing West Europe. In the first case, the element of surprise may be of less importance to the Kremlin than the desire of concentrating superior forces prior to the attack; whereas, in the case of a preventive war, the Kremlin may choose the time for the attack and exploit fully the element of surprise. In the latter case, the Soviets are likely to attack with only slightly reinforced occupation forces that are continually strengthened from rear areas. In either case Soviet strategy will be designed to seize the European seacoasts and the Pyrenees Mountains quickly in an effort to wipe out pockets of resistance of the Western forces, push their air bases back across the sea, and, by employing only minor security forces, prevent for a long time Western efforts to establish bridgeheads on the European continent from which to launch a counter-offensive.
2. The Soviet Army forces are likely to be deployed in three main bodies, with the strongest and northern advancing from the area of Saxony-Anhalt, north of the Harz Mountains, across the lower Rhine as far as the Dutch, Belgian, and French shores of the Atlantic Ocean; a central body advancing from Thuringia to the French coast of the Mediterranean Sea across the upper Rhine, astride of the Vosges Mountains, and down the Rhone valley; and a southern body advancing from Hungary and Rumania across northern Yugoslavia as far as the Po River valley. Subsidiary operations will probably be the seizure of Denmark by amphibious forces; the occupation of Bavaria up to the Danube River and of the northern foothills of the Alps by Soviet and Czechoslovakian forces; and a thrust to the Dardanelles and southern Greece by Bulgarian, Rumanian, and Soviet forces. Further subsidiary operations, such as efforts to take hold of the Scandinavian seaboard, to annihilate Western pockets of resistance and to advance to southern Italy, would play only a minor role in Soviet initial planning in Central Europe. The possible build-up of the Soviet forces preparatory to an assault from the Soviet Zone of Germany may be the following:

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1A

-2-

Northern Front. The Second and Fourth Gds Mecz Armies and the Third Shock Army, the latter reinforced by 6 divisions; constituting a total of 4 tank divisions, 5 mechanized divisions, and 8 rifle divisions; supported by the IV Arty Corps excluding the 6th Gds AAA Div; advancing with its bulk from the Salzwedel-Helmstedt sector and, possibly, with the IX Mtz Rifle Corps from the Wittenburg-Boizenburg area north of the Elbe River.

Central Front. The First and Third Gds Mecz Armies and the Eighth Gds Army, the latter reinforced by 4 divisions, constituting a total of 4 tank divisions, 5 mechanized divisions, and 6 rifle divisions; possibly strengthened by the 20th Tank Div from Silesia; supported by at least 1 more artillery division; the Eighth Gds Army and the Third Gds Mecz Army advancing from the Eisenach-Meiningen area and the First Gds Mecz Army from the Schleiz-Plauen area.

The first assault wave will probably be reinforced immediately upon the attack by 20 to 30 divisions arriving from the zone of the interior. It is conceivable that the isthmus of Holstein will be forced and Denmark be occupied by amphibious troops from the Baltic MD, possibly the Sixth Gds Army, and by the 26th Gds Mecz Div advancing from its billeting area in Pomerania to Mecklenburg. The Fifth Gds Mecz Army in East Prussia may move westward to link up with the Northern Front. An advance of Czechoslovakian forces from the Bohemian Forest toward Regensburg may be coordinated with a thrust by the Soviet Central Group of Forces across the Salzach and the lower Inn Rivers.

3. During the first phase of the possible Soviet Army operations outlined in paragraph 1, it will be the principal mission of the Soviet Air Force effectively to support the advance of the ground forces. In this, the Air Force will have a threefold task: First, the attainment of air superiority over the theatre of operations by destroying Western air power in the air and on the ground, with the object of providing the Soviet ground and air forces with full liberty of movement; second, the support of the ground forces by attacking Western supply lines, assembly areas, and centres of resistance; and third, tactical and operational air reconnaissance. In addition, the Air Force may commit parachute and air landing troops. To execute these missions, the Soviet Air Force has immediately available the Twenty-Fourth and Fourth Air Armies to cooperate with the northern and central assault bodies; and the Fifty-Ninth Air Army in Austria-Hungary to cooperate with the southern assault body. It is not expected that the air forces of the satellite countries would take an active part in the offensive operations. Their mission will probably be restricted to the defense of their own countries and to the support of Soviet air units through their ground organizations. In view of the present East-West relations of power, the Soviet air armies available measure up to the requirements and can probably execute their missions without reinforcement prior to the assault. The strategic disposition of air forces is dependent on the ground organization at the airfields available. The present disposition of air units in the Soviet Zone of Germany and Austria permits an effective employment during the initial phase of offensive operations, making unnecessary a westward movement of air units prior to the assault. The radius of action of the air units in their present disposition is the following:

Germany (Twenty-Fourth Air Army). Fighters approximately as far as the Bremen-Bielefeld-Muerzburg-Ingolstadt line; ground-attack aircraft as far as the Hamburg-Kassel-southern Thuringian Forest line; jet bombers as far as the Skagen-Calais-Reims-Besancon line; and conventional bombers as far as ground-attack aircraft in daytime and as far as the Rhine River at night and in adverse weather conditions.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1A

-3-

Austria-Hungary. All aircraft as far as the western border of the U.S. and British Zones of Austria and the Yugoslav-Italian border. The components of the Fourth Air Army in Poland and Polish-occupied Germany cannot be employed in direct support of the offensive operations from their present air bases. Should the plans for the initial assault provide for an employment of the Fourth Air Army, the army will probably move to Czechoslovakia to close the gap between the Twenty-Fourth and the Fifty-Ninth Air Armies. It cannot advance westwards as far as the Thuringian-Saxon area because of the insufficient number of airfields there. In the further course of offensive operations, it is imperative that fighter units primarily, but also ground-attack and bomber units should be moved from the U.S.S.R. to the theatre of operations.

Essential Soviet Preparations Prior to an Offensive

4. The Soviet Army forces in the Soviet Zone of Germany show some critical shortcomings when their present potential is compared with the requirements of their possible strategic goal and grouping:
 - a. The Soviet occupation forces in Germany as of today lack infantry. The armored forces are capable of moving quickly as far as the Pyrenees Mountains, whereas even in the first phase of a surprise attack, the number of rifle divisions that are to secure and mop up the territory conquered is too small.
 - b. The Soviet heavy artillery units as of today are too few and too disadvantageously organized to meet the requirements of two main assault bodies. When the northern front is assigned the IV Arty Corps, the central front would have no artillery larger than 122 mm with the exception of the Eighth Gds Army's heavy brigade and the JSI-152s of the heavy tank and self-propelled artillery regiments.
 - c. Even when discounting an effective destruction of railroad installations in West Germany, the far-flung scope of operations would require an enormous amount of motorized supply shipments which could not be covered by the motor transport brigade of the GOFG and the motor transport battalions of the armies available at present.
 - d. A concentration of forces in Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia which is required prior to an attack will call for the establishment of numerous additional fuel and ammunition supply installations close to the zonal border, since most of the major supply depots available to date are located east of the Elbe River. For example, it is believed that a road movement of armored vehicles from the eastern portion of the Soviet Zone of Germany to the assembly area close to the zonal border will nearly consume the fuel in the vehicles' tanks. On the other hand, a switch to a strategic assembly by rail would eliminate the element of surprise.
5. The shortcomings listed above will necessitate the following measures preparatory to the attack:
 - a. Movement to the Soviet Zone of Germany of infantry forces estimated at ten rifle divisions. This can be effected on six railroad lines across Poland within five days, with a train traveling one and a half days from the rail change-over points on the eastern boundary of Poland to the assembly area. Familiarizing the new troops with the terrain and indoctrinating them on the conduct of operations will increase the period of preparation to at least eight days.
 - b. Movement to the Soviet Zone of Germany of heavy artillery in the strength of one or two artillery divisions. This transportation operation will advance the beginning of the rail movement across Poland by at least two days.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1A

-4-

- c. Supplying or commandeering of not less than 2,000 to 3,000 trucks. Even a confiscation of German vehicles on short notice and their assignment to motor transport units would require four or five days.
- d. Establishment of numerous camouflaged fuel and ammunition dumps in the zonal border area of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. Under security precautions, the establishment and stocking of these dumps will require not less than two weeks.

Even in the unlikely case of a Soviet preventive surprise attack, at least partial measures like those described will be required prior to an attack.

- 6. Apart from a possible, but not absolutely essential, replenishment of the Soviet units which are still short of 20 percent of the EM strength prescribed by the wartime T/O, the Soviets will have to make further preparations, most of them requiring only little time, such as the emplacement of AA guns in the assembly area and at the bridges across the Elbe River; the westward movement and preparation of bridge-building material; the orientation in, and marking of, the terrain in the assembly area; an increase in signal-communications in the zonal border area; the termination of field exercises to overhaul vehicles and weapons; the removal or change of motor vehicle numbers; the activation of railroad brigades to operate the trunk lines in West Germany; etc.
- 7. The measures taken by the Soviet Air Force preparatory to an assault will include the replenishment of tactical units with personnel and materiel; the stocking of fuel, ammunition and spare parts depots; the reconnoitering of advanced airfields close to the zonal border; the assembly of airfield construction units and material; the detaching of advance parties to Czechoslovakia in order to prepare the ground organization; the detaching of advance parties from air units in the U.S.S.R. that are to move westward upon the beginning of the offensive; the reconnoitering and preparation of AA gun emplacements; and general preparations for mobilization within the air units.

Principal Western Intelligence Efforts to Determine Soviet Offensive Preparations in the Soviet Zone of Germany

- 8. The analysis of Soviet requirements preparatory to an offensive indicates three geographical divisions of the Soviet Zone of Germany which should be the principal areas of surveillance by Western intelligence agencies in the effort to recognize Soviet offensive preparations in time. These are: First, the Oder-Weisse crossing points to determine an influx of troops and materiel; second, the Elbe River crossing points to determine strategic movements of the mechanized armies; and third, the zonal border areas of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia to determine strategic assemblies and preparations for them.
- 9. The Oder-Weisse crossing points should be covered by both visual observation of bridges and border-crossing stations and by information on rail movements from the records of the regional railroad headquarters (RB Direktionen) of Greifswald, Berlin, Cottbus, and Dresden. Essential elements of information requiring speedy transmission include:
 - a. Dispatch of empty trains to the Polish-Soviet border, an operation which is bound to begin not less than 10 days prior to D-Day.
 - b. Transfer to the Soviet Zone of Germany of personnel to bring up the units in Germany to full strength. This measure, if envisaged at all, should be taken several weeks prior to D-Day. Exact information as to whether the incoming personnel are young recruits or trained reserves wearing war decorations is essential.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1A

-5-

- c. Influx of whole infantry and artillery units, an operation which should occur at least eight days prior to D-Day. Special attention should be paid to incoming artillery units with guns larger than 122 mm.
 - d. Arrival of advance details of air force personnel from the U.S.S.R.
 - e. Incoming shipments of a large number of trucks with drivers, probably beginning several weeks prior to D-Day. Information as to whether these shipments are bound for the known vehicle depots or for other supply centres is essential.
 - f. An increase in the volume of incoming ammunition and fuel supply shipment. To determine this is difficult, and it can be detected only by comparison with weekly figures on the volume of such shipments.
 - g. Measures relative to AAA protection.
10. Surveillance of the Elbe River crossing points is decisive for the determination of Soviet offensive operations only if communication of information by radio is possible within 40 hours, because the armored forces in the eastern portion of the Soviet Zone of Germany would require three or four nights prior to D-Day to advance to the assembly areas. Since Soviet troop movements for the purpose of maneuvers are usually effected in daytime and by rail, even at short distances, an unusually large volume of road movements, primarily at night, will be clearly recognizable and constitute a definite sign of alarm, but will take place on very short notice. The important Elbe River crossing points at Wittenberge, east of Stendal, Magdeburg, Barby, Dessau, Wittenberg, Torgau, Riesa, Meissen, and Dresden are located in the neighborhood of Soviet military posts. Efforts should be made to give sources operating there the possibility of quick transmission of information.
11. Surveillance of the zonal border areas of Salzwedel-Oschersleben-Magdeburg-Stendal and Eisenach-Meiningen-Hildburghausen-Erfurt is of decisive importance to determine Soviet offensive intentions. Less importance is attributed to the surveillance of the Mecklenburg border area west of Schwerin and the Schleiz-Flauen-Oelsnitz area. By closely watching these areas, sources will be able to determine Soviet war preparations, even if the units of the first assault wave should disguise a strategic assembly as a stay for field exercises at the troop training grounds of Letzling Heath, Kindel, and Ohrdruf. Special attention should be paid to the following indications of an offensive:
- a. Assembly of combat-ready units with supporting weapons from army areas other than those from which the troops usually staying at the troop-training grounds come.
 - b. Establishment of supply installations with a capacity exceeding the requirements of the troops in the maneuver areas.
 - c. Tent camps in woods.
 - d. AAA protection of roads and railroad lines leading to the zonal border.
 - e. Intensification of Soviet border control.
 - f. Establishment of signal-communications exceeding the requirements of troops engaged in maneuvers.
 - g. Construction of splinter-proof dugouts and foxholes.
 - h. Preparation of bridge-building equipment and its loading on vehicles.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1A

-6-

- i. Terrain reconnaissance by groups of officers.
- j. Establishment of advanced airfields; appearance of reconnaissance aircraft.
- k. Discontinuation of field exercises and shifting of efforts to vehicle and arms maintenance.
- l. Intensification of supply operations and loading of live ammunition.
- m. Appearance of troops wearing field uniforms exclusively.
- n. Intensified patrol activity by MGB and SSD personnel; large-scale raids for Western intelligence agents.

By establishing short-range intercept receivers and direction finders in the border zone of West Germany, Western intelligence agencies would open for themselves a sure and rapid source of information, inasmuch as they could intercept voice radio traffic by tanks and would determine a sudden increase in the volume of radio traffic by Soviet agents such as would occur shortly before D-Day.

- 12. Besides watching troop movements, a continual surveillance at the present military posts of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Soviet Zone of Germany will also help to determine indications for possible war preparations, such as:
 - a. Cancellation of leaves and postponement of outgoing shipments of discharges and military dependents.
 - b. Withdrawal from the posts of rear details of units at troop training grounds.
 - c. Removal or change of motor vehicle numbers.
 - d. Preparation for departure by komendatura personnel.
 - e. Discharge of German employees and discontinuation of operations in military laundries.
 - f. Arrival of truck convoys from other military posts and commandeering of German vehicles.
 - g. Unusual changes in radio traffic by army and air force units.
- 13. Summarizing, the following measures should be taken by Western intelligence agencies to determine in time any preparations of Soviet troops in the Soviet Zone of Germany for an attack against West Europe:
 - a. Complete coverage of rail movements across the Oder-Neisse line by both inside information from the operations sections of the railroad subdistrict offices and visual observation of the border-crossing stations; and transmission of information pertaining to rail movements by radio.
 - b. Close surveillance of the zonal border area of Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia; paying special attention to the symptoms outlined in paragraph 11.
 - c. Watching for strategic movements of the mechanized armies across the Elbe River; and transmission of such information by radio.
 - d. Establishment of a system of intercept receivers and direction finders to monitor the entire Soviet Radio traffic, particularly voice radio traffic by Soviet tanks close to the zonal border; and to detect and eliminate Soviet agent transmitters in West Germany.
 - e. Continual surveillance of movements and combat preparedness of Soviet units in the Soviet Zone of Germany, by coordinating the routine intelligence effort at troop-training grounds and military posts.